

*Exhaustive  
(Background)*

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*Review*

AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF  
THE WALPOLE-NORFOLK CLASSIFICATION PROGRAM

Massachusetts Department of Correction

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*Process of assignment  
& also  
... good for  
listing  
categories  
of classification  
i.e., progs.*

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The present trend in our State Correctional Institutions is toward the development of meaningful rehabilitation programs designed to benefit the inmate, both while he is incarcerated and after he is released. These programs offer opportunities for educational and vocational training, recreational activities, social involvement, medical treatment and counseling experience. Administration of these programs is through a classification system which, according to the 1964 edition of The Basic Structure of the Administration of Criminal Justice in Massachusetts, seeks "... not only to learn why the inmate is in prison, but also what both he and the prison can do to help him learn to cope successfully with the real world outside." This same edition points out that classification committees are to be organized to deal with individual inmate needs and develop constructive rehabilitation programs. Such committees have since been established and the focus of this study is the classification committee which presently serves M.C.I., Walpole and M.C.I., Norfolk. The purpose of the study is to assess its effectiveness in formulating and carrying through rehabilitation programs during its first year of operation.

The Committee is made up of the Directors of Treatment, the Deputy Superintendents, the Head Social Workers, the Head School Teachers, the Supervisor of Industries, the Placement Officers from both Norfolk and Walpole and the Case Manager of the inmate being classified. All the inmates that come before the Committee have been at Walpole for at least six weeks and they have received both a "formal" and an "informal" orientation to the prison system. The "formal" orientation is an attempt to realistically present the facilities that are available to the inmate and encourage him to participate in the various programs. This orientation is generally conducted by one of the Directors of Treatment and the Deputy at Walpole sees each man as well. The "informal" orientation comes through the courtesy of the more experienced inmates and usually takes the form of how to "succeed" while in the prison system.

During the six weeks before the inmate is classified, he is interviewed by a social worker, given some form of intelligence test and subjected to a physical examination. In addition, a wealth of background data concerning family, education, work experience and previous criminal involvement is gathered by the Case Manager. All of this information is available to the Committee before the inmate comes before them for classification. At the Committee meetings, the Case Manager presents all the pertinent data on the inmate before he comes in to be interviewed. The Directors of Treatment conduct the interview with the other members of the Committee asking questions and making comments as they feel it necessary. The object of the interview is to encourage a free communication between the Committee members and the inmate and ultimately develop a rehabilitation program most appropriate to the needs of the inmate. The outcome of the Committee's discussion with and around the inmate is a series of recommendations concerning the institution where he will serve his time, educational program, vocational training, a work assignment, necessary medical and counseling attention, recreational and avocational activities, social involvement and his suitability for forestry, work release and youthful offender programs.

#### Data Collection

The data for the study were gathered primarily to determine the degree to which the Committee recommendations are carried through. The first task was to collect data on each of the inmates admitted to Walpole after February 1, 1967, the beginning of the Committee's operation. This was started by several research workers from the Commonwealth Service Corps during the Summer of 1967 and finished, through the end of October, by the present researcher. In addition to making note of the Committee's recommendations, a wealth of background data was recorded with the intention of using it in future Department research.

The second major task was to determine inmate participation in the various programs at the Institutions regardless of the Committee's recommendation. The third step was to code all the information on punch cards and sort it to yield the data central to the study. The background data as well as the recommendations were taken from the Classification Report found in the inmate file in the Central Office. The data on inmate involvement were gathered by submitting the names of those in the sample to the various prison services. Generally, the head of the service or the clerk reviewed the list and indicated those who were in any way involved.

#### Sample

It was the intention of the study to analyze data on as many inmates seen by the Committee as possible. The total number on which at least some information was gathered was close to 300 inmates. However, this group included inmates admitted to Walpole as late as December 1967. In doing a follow-up study it is necessary to allow a reasonable period of time to put programs into effect thus the true sample used in the study consisted of inmates admitted to Walpole before the end of October 1967, a sample of approximately 240. Of the sample of 240, about 40 were excluded because the background information on them, including Classification Reports, had not been sent to the Central Office. Another 30 were excluded because of a time lag in recording inmate transportation in the Central Office. When the lists for researching inmate participation were drawn up, it was not always clear if the inmate were still at Walpole or if he had been transferred. In the cases where the name was inadvertently placed on the wrong lists, time limitations on the researcher forced their exclusion from the sample.

The sample that the study is based upon consisted of 64 inmates at Walpole and 95 who had been at Walpole and then transferred to Norfolk. Complete information was gathered on 11 inmates who were transferred from Walpole to Concord, but the data will not be presented in this report because they are re-classified on

being admitted to Concord. The extent of bias built into the report by the exclusion of 70 of the original 240 for the reasons cited above is not known.

#### Data Presentation

The information gathered in this study will be presented in such a way as to show the type and quantity of recommendations made, the way in which they were carried through and the actual number of inmates in the sample involved in the programs, both with and without the Committee's recommendation. In each of the areas covered there will be a discussion of the number of recommendations made in that area and what action was taken on them as well as a discussion of the number of men that these recommendations covered. In addition, data on those men who became involved in an area without a Committee recommendation will be presented. The number of recommendations in an area often exceeds the number of men who had a recommendation in that area because some of the men were recommended for several activities.

The results of the study will be presented in the order that the topics appear on the recommendation sheets and will include institutional placement, work assignment, educational program, counseling recommendation, social involvement, recreational and avocational interests and finally any recommended medical attention. Although all the programs are not as yet in operation, the Committee also judges suitability of the inmate for Forestry, Work Release and Youthful Offender programs. The final decision that the Committee makes is the date when the inmates progress will be reviewed. The data will be presented in such a way as to compare similar services at Norfolk and Walpole.

#### Institutional Placement

The data on institutional placement in this study were biased by the method of data collection. Those inmates who were considered as part of the final sample had all been transferred to the recommended institution. Those inmates who

were not transferred to the recommended institution were excluded from the sample because the time required to compile new lists of these inmates and submit them to the clerks of the various prison services would have been prohibitive. Thus, while 100% of the sample used for this study were in the recommended institution, those excluded from the sample were excluded because they were not in the recommended institution. A brief study of those who were excluded indicated that most were not transferred to the recommended institution for disciplinary, medical or security reasons unforeseen at the time of Classification. It appears that when it is at all possible the inmates are transferred to the recommended institution shortly after the Classification interview.

#### Work Recommendations

The next area of consideration is follow-up on work recommendations. In order to make the data more meaningful, four categories of work experience were set up; those who never worked at their assigned job, those who spent less than half their work time at it, those who spent between 50 and 99% of their time at it and those who spent all of their work time at it.

The Norfolk data revealed that 30 inmates (31.5%) never worked at the assigned job, 16 inmates (16.7%) spent less than half of their work time at it, 14 inmates (14.6%) spent between 50 and 99% of their time at it and 35 inmates (36.8%) spent all of their work time at the assigned job.

The Walpole data revealed that 8 inmates (12.5%) never worked at the assigned job, 11 inmates (17%) spent less than half of their work time at it, 16 inmates (25%) spent between 50 and 99% of their time at it and 29 inmates (45.3%) spent all of their time at the recommended job. While this seems to be more impressive than the Norfolk data, it must be pointed out that of the 29 who have spent all of their time working at the recommended job, 27 (93%) had the job before seeing the Classification Committee. In considering the entire Walpole sample, it

was found that 47 (73%) had the job that the Classification Committee recommended prior to the classification interview. It is reasonably safe to assume that the committee frequently "rubber stamps" the job assignments of those inmates who remain at Walpole.

#### Educational Recommendations

The data on educational programs were gathered in such a way as to assess the number of people who become involved and to reflect the impact of Committee recommendations on this involvement. Included under educational programs were High School Equivalency, Adult Basic Education, correspondence courses, courses offered through Phillips Brooks and Boston University and several programs such as Clerical and Computer Training.

At Norfolk a total of 79 educational recommendations were made and of these 30 (38%) were carried through as recommended, 25 (32%) were not carried through as recommended, but resulted in some other educational activity and 24 (30%) were not carried through in any manner. In considering the number of inmates involved, 73 (77%) of the sample had some form of educational recommendation, but only 48 (66%) of these actually got involved. Twenty-two (23%) of the inmates transferred to Norfolk had no educational recommendation made for them, but of these 10 (45.5%) did get involved in some educational program.

The Walpole data on educational recommendations revealed that of 58 recommendations made 11 (19%) were carried out as stated, 8 (12%) resulted in educational involvement in other than the recommended area and 40 (69%) resulted in no subsequent involvement. In the sample there were 48 inmates (75%) who had at least one educational recommendation and of these 16 (33%) became involved. Sixteen of the Walpole sample had no educational recommendation and of these 4 (25%) became involved in some educational program.

### Vocational Recommendations

The vocational data included training in areas such as barbering, welding, upholstering, automotive repair, oil burner repair and electronics. Although there are several operating at the present time, there were no vocational programs operating at Walpole during the time period that this study considers.

In the Norfolk sample there were a total of 24 vocational recommendations. Four of these (17%) were followed as recommended, one (4%) resulted in involvement in another vocational program and 19 (79%) resulted in no subsequent involvement. In considering inmate participation in the same sample, 24 men (25%) had a vocational recommendation and of these 5 (21%) became involved in some vocational program. Consideration of the other 71 in the sample (75%) without a recommendation revealed that 13 (18%) of these men did become involved in vocational programs.

### Counseling Recommendations

The data on counseling involvement were gathered by the researcher from the available material at the institutions. The data at Norfolk appeared to be relatively complete, but at Walpole there was an indication that record keeping is a hit or miss affair. It is likely that there are more involved in counseling at Walpole than the records indicated.

There were 69 counseling recommendations made for the inmates in the Norfolk sample, 27 (39%) resulted in subsequent counseling involvement, 38 (55%) resulted in contact with the counseling service, for a case review, but not in actual counseling and 4 (6%) resulted in no counseling attention. Sixty-three inmates (66%) of the Norfolk sample had at least one counseling recommendation and of these 59 (94%) were at least interviewed by the counseling service. Although 32 (34%) had no counseling recommendation on entering the Institution, 18 of these (56%) did come in contact with the counseling service.

The Walpole sample yielded 45 recommendations for some type of counseling involvement while only 6 (13%) resulted in any recorded counseling involvement. Forty of the inmates had at least one recommendation, but only 5 (12.5%) of these had any recorded contact with the service. None of the 24 (37.5%) without recommendations had contact with the service. As mentioned above, these figures are most likely a misrepresentation of the total number involved.

#### Social Recommendations

Both of the institutions have a variety of social activities designed to be meaningful parts of their rehabilitation programs. Included in this area are the various church related groups, service groups such as Reading for the Blind, hobby groups such as the Stamp or the Chess Club, educational groups such as the Quiz or the Think Club and addicts groups such as SNAP and AA.

In the Norfolk sample there were a total of 91 recommendations made for some type of social activity. Twenty-nine (32%) of the social recommendations were carried out as stated, 21 (49%) resulted in social activity in other than the recommended area and 41 (45%) resulted in no subsequent social involvement. There were 64 inmates (67.5%) in the sample that had at least one recommendation and of these 39 (61%) did get involved in some social activity. Thirty-one of the inmates (32.5%) had no social recommendation on entering the Institution, but of these 12 (39%) did become involved in some social activity.

Social involvement data at Walpole found 34 recommendations for some social activity and of these recommendations 11 (32.5%) carried out as stated. Eighteen (53%) resulted in social activity other than the one recommended and 5 (14.5%) resulted in no social involvement. Twenty-nine inmates (45%) had social recommendations and 23 (79%) of these became involved in some manner. Thirty-five inmates (55%) had no social recommendations, however, 25 (71.5%) of these did become socially involved.

### Recreational and Avocational Recommendations

The area of recreational and avocational interests included physical activities such as football, baseball and weight-lifting and avocational pursuits such as leather work, woodwork and painting.

At Norfolk, there were 45 recommendations made for the inmates in the sample. Seventeen of the recommendations (38%) were carried out as stated on the recommendation sheets and an additional 22 (49%) resulted in at least some form of recreational or avocational participation. In 6 (13%) of the cases there was no involvement as the result of the Committee recommendation. In the sample only 39 inmates (41%) had any form of recreational or avocational recommendation and of these men 26 (67%) did become involved. Thirty-seven (66%) of the 56 inmates without any recommendation became involved in some type of recreational or avocational activity.

The Walpole data in the same area revealed a total of 50 recommendations made for the men in the sample. Fourteen of the recommendations (28%) were carried out according to the Committee's decisions and 17 others (34%) resulted in another type of recreational or avocational activity. Nineteen of the recommendations (38%) were not carried through in any way. Thirty-four of the inmates in the Walpole sample (53%) had some type of recommendation in this area and of these 19 (56%) did become involved. Thirty of the inmates (47%) had no recommendation in this area; however, 15 (50%) of those did become involved in some program.

### Medical Recommendations

The final data to be gathered as part of the actual follow-up study was information on medical attention received as the result of Committee recommendations. The medical service at Norfolk was resistant to the methodology used in gathering data for the study, so the procedure was somewhat altered. Instead of submitting the entire list of inmates in the sample to the medical service, only the names of

those with a specific medical recommendation were submitted and the Service acknowledged that the inmate either had or had not received the necessary attention. In the interest of consistency, the same procedure was followed at Walpole.

The Norfolk data revealed that 33 (35%) inmates had some type of medical recommendation made for them and of these only 2 (6%) did not receive medical attention. The Walpole sample found 15 (23%) with some type of recommendation, 7 of whom (44%) received no medical attention.

#### Forestry, Work Release and Youthful Offender Programs

The supplementary data gathered on suitability for Forestry, Work Release and Youthful Offender programs were divided into three categories: those who were found acceptable for the program, those judged unsuitable and those who were found unsuitable because of the nature of their offense, an outstanding warrant or because the Committee felt that the inmate needed some time in a more structured environment first.

In the Norfolk sample 77 men were considered for Forestry and of these 12 (15.5%) were judged suitable, 42 (54.5%) were judged unsuitable and 23 (30%) did not meet the legal or time requirements as mentioned above. The Youthful Offender sample of 95 at Norfolk yielded data indicating 42 inmates (44%) were acceptable, 49 (52%) were unacceptable and 4 (4%) were excluded for legal or temporal considerations. The 95 considered for Work Release found 19 inmates (20%) suitable, 58 (61%) unsuitable and 18 (19%) excluded for legal or time considerations.

In the Walpole sample 52 were considered for Forestry and of these 6 (11.5%) were found suitable, 40 (77%) were found unsuitable and 6 (11.5%) were excluded for legal or time considerations. There were 64 considered for the Youthful Offender Program and 11 (17%) were found suitable, 52 (81%) were judged unsuitable and 1 was rejected for legal reasons. In consideration of the 64 inmates reviewed

for Work Release suitability, 8 (12.5%) were found acceptable, 52 (81%) were rejected and 4 (6.5%) were excluded for legal or temporal reasons.

#### Review Date

The final data to be analyzed in the study was the review date set by the Committee as a check on the progress of the inmate. In the Norfolk sample 90% were scheduled to be seen by the Committee within a year of their initial interview. At Walpole nearly 80% were scheduled to be seen by the Committee within one year. While no formal analysis was performed on the data, indications are that very few have been reviewed at this time. The good intentions of the Committee seem to have been lost in a heavy case load.

#### Discussion of Data

Considered as a whole, the data from the follow-up study are somewhat less than encouraging. It appears that the considerable amount of time and energy expended in preparation for the Committee interview and the time that the Committee itself devotes to working out a meaningful program produces a minimal impact in terms of the implementation of recommendations. A careful review of the data collected reveals that in a relatively high number of cases the involvement rate of the inmates who did not have any recommendation in a given area nearly equalled the involvement rate of those with a recommendation. Participation in most of the programs is on a voluntary basis and it appears that the Committee has only moderate success in encouraging the inmates to become involved.

In designing the present classification system, the Central Office personnel along with the personnel of both Walpole and Norfolk carefully analyzed the requirements of an effective classification system. The Correctional Social Workers at the institutions were designated as the "the most significant staff figure(s) in the total classification process." In addition to preparing and presenting to the Committee, information about an inmate, the Correctional Social

Worker has primary responsibility for seeing that the inmate's program materializes. The data presented in this paper indicate that at some point the classification system has a tendency to break down and this in turn implies that the Correctional Social Workers are experiencing difficulty in doing their job. It would perhaps best serve the Classification System if all those involved could meet to define and discuss the problems involved in program implementation and actively seek more efficient and effective methods of resolving these problems.

The introduction to this study makes reference to the aims of the Classification System while the inmate is still in prison; to deal with individual inmate needs and develop constructive rehabilitation programs. In addition, it was pointed out that the inmate receives an "informal" orientation to prison life through his interaction with other prisoners. It seems likely that if the Classification System has shortcomings in its operation, the first to know are the inmates it is supposed to benefit, and further, it will be these inmates who in the future will downgrade, for new arrivals, the importance of the System. If in fact the System operates poorly, then word of mouth will present it as being even worse and from a rehabilitative point of view, this handicap is extremely difficult to overcome.

The conclusion of this paper must be that the Classification System that operates at Norfolk and Walpole has met with limited success after its first year of operation. In many instances the inmate became involved in the rehabilitation programs seemingly independent of the Committee recommendations and conversely, a high proportion of those with the Committee's recommendation do not become involved in the programs. It would best serve the Institutions' rehabilitative efforts if at this point, the system were re-evaluated by carefully defining the problem areas and introducing constructive change in order to facilitate the rehabilitative process.

Summary of Involvement Rate of Inmates Both  
With and Without Committee Recommendation

	Walpole		Norfolk		Combined Total	
	N (%)*	Involvement Rate**	N (%)	Involvement Rate	N (%)	Involvement Rate
<u>Educational</u>						
# w/recomm	48 (75%)	16 (33%)	73 (77%)	48 (66%)	121 (76%)	64 (52%)
# w/o recomm	16 (25%)	4 (25%)	22 (23%)	10 (45%)	38 (24%)	14 (37%)
<u>Vocational</u>						
# w/recomm	3 (5%)	0	24 (25%)	5 (21%)	27 (17%)	5 (18%)
# w/o recomm	61 (95%)	0	71 (75%)	13 (18%)	132 (83%)	13 (10%)
<u>Counseling</u>						
# w/recomm	40 (63%)	5 (13%)	63 (66%)	59 (94%)	103 (64%)	64 (62%)
# w/o recomm	24 (37%)	0	32 (34%)	18 (56%)	56 (36%)	18 (30%)
<u>Social</u>						
# w/recomm	29 (45%)	23 (79%)	64 (67%)	39 (61%)	93 (58%)	62 (67%)
# w/o recomm	35 (55%)	25 (71%)	31 (33%)	12 (39%)	66 (42%)	37 (56%)
<u>Rec. and Avo.</u>						
# w/recomm	34 (53%)	19 (56%)	39 (41%)	26 (67%)	73 (46%)	45 (62%)
# w/o recomm	30 (47%)	15 (50%)	56 (59%)	37 (66%)	86 (54%)	52 (60%)

\*This column shows the number of men in the sample who did have at least one recommendation made for them as opposed to those who had no recommendation in the particular area.

\*\*This column shows the involvement rate of those who did have a recommendation in the area as opposed to the rate of those who did not.

Summary of Total Number of Recommendations  
and Resultant Inmate Involvement

	Walpole (N=64)	Norfolk (N=95)	Combined Total (N=159)
<u>Educational Recommendations</u>			
Total # of recommendations	58	79	137
Followed as recommended	11 (19%)	30 (38%)	41 (30%)
Alternate involvement	7 (12%)	25 (32%)	32 (23%)
No involvement	40 (69%)	24 (30%)	64 (47%)
<u>Vocational Recommendations</u>			
Total # of recommendations		24	
Followed as recommended		4 (17%)	
Alternate involvement	No Programs	1 (4%)	
No involvement		19 (79%)	
<u>Counseling Recommendations</u>			
Total # of recommendations	45	69	114
Followed as recommended	6 (13%)	27 (39%)	33 (29%)
Seen, but not taken as a case	Not Available	38 (55%)	38 (33%)
No involvement	39 (87%)	4 (6%)	43 (38%)
<u>Social Recommendations</u>			
Total # of recommendations	34	91	125
Followed as recommended	11 (32%)	29 (32%)	40 (32%)
Alternate involvement	18 (53%)	21 (23%)	39 (32%)
No involvement	5 (15%)	44 (45%)	49 (36%)
<u>Recreational and Avocational</u>			
Total # of recommendations	50	45	95
Followed as recommended	14 (28%)	17 (38%)	31 (33%)
Alternate involvement	17 (34%)	22 (49%)	39 (41%)
No involvement	19 (38%)	6 (13%)	25 (26%)

Summary of Forestry, Work Release  
and Youthful Offender Suitability

	Walpole	Norfolk	Combined Total
<u>Forestry</u>			
Total Sample	52	77	129
Suitable	6 (11.5%)	12 (15.5%)	18 (14%)
Unsuitable	40 (77%)	42 (54.5%)	82 (64%)
Unsuitable for legal or time considerations	6 (11.5%)	23 (30%)	29 (22%)
<u>Work Release</u>			
Total Sample	64	95	159
Suitable	8 (12.5%)	19 (20%)	27 (17%)
Unsuitable	52 (81%)	58 (61%)	110 (69%)
Unsuitable for legal or time considerations	4 (6.5%)	18 (19%)	22 (14%)
<u>Youthful Offender</u>			
Total Sample	64	95	159
Suitable	11 (17%)	42 (44%)	53 (33%)
Unsuitable	52 (81%)	49 (52%)	101 (64%)
Unsuitable for legal or time considerations	1 (2%)	4 (4%)	5 (3%)